## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims below.

## LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A method for manufacturing an information storage system comprising:

at least one read/write head comprising a transducer for information introduction and/or retrieval from the information storage medium; and an actuator supporting at least one read/write head for moving the transducer relative to the information storage medium;

depositing a composite nickel coating on a non-magnetic substrate, the composite nickel coating including an electrolessly deposited nickel layer formed on a sputter deposited nickel layer,

eliminating a subsequent polishing step, and

depositing a magnetic recording layer on the composite nickel coating.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the sputter deposited nickel layer comprises nickel-phosphorus.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the electrolessly deposited nickel layer comprises nickel-phosphorus.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the sputter deposited nickel layer has a thickness in a range of about 10 Å to about 1000 Å.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the electrolessly deposited nickel layer has a thickness in a range of about 0.5 microns to about 10 microns.

6-12. (Canceled)

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the surface roughness (Ra) is an average of a 10 micron x 10 micron scan of a surface of the composite nickel coating by an atomic field microscopy.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the composite nickel coating has a surface roughness (Ra) less than about 10 Å.

16. (Currently Amended) A magnetic recording medium comprising, in this order:

(a) a non-magnetic substrate,

(b) a composite nickel coating comprising a sputter deposited nickel layer and an electrolessly deposited nickel layer, the composite nickel coating having a bottom surface contacting the non-magnetic substrate and a top surface, and

(c) a magnetic recording layer on the top surface of the composite nickel coating,

wherein the top surface of the composite nickel coating is a non-polished surface and has a surface roughness (Ra) of less than about 10 Å with the magnetic recording layer thereon,

wherein the surface roughness (Ra) is averaged over the entire surface of the top surface of the composite nickel coating.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously presented) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the top surface of the composite nickel directly contacts the magnetic layer.

19. (Previously presented) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, wherein the non-magnetic substrate comprises glass or a glass-ceramic material.

20. (Previously presented) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, the electrolessly deposited nickel layer comprises NiP.

21. (Previously presented) A magnetic recording medium of claim 16, the electrolessly deposited nickel layer comprises NiP comprising about 15 atomic percent to about 30 atomic percent Ni.